

Perception of the Elemental World

Rudolf Steiner - Munich, 26 August 1913

WHEN SPEAKING about the spiritual worlds as we are doing in these lectures, we should keep the following well in mind: the clairvoyant consciousness which the human soul can develop in itself will change nothing in the nature and individuality of a person, for everything entering that consciousness was already long present in man's nature. Knowing a thing is not the same as creating it; a person learns only to perceive what is already there as a fact. Obvious as this is, it has to be said, for we must lead our thoughts to realize that the nature of the human being is hidden in the very depths of his existence; it can be brought up out of those depths only through clairvoyant cognition. It follows from this that the true, inmost nature of man's being cannot be brought to light in any other way than through occult knowledge. We can learn what a human being actually is not through any kind of philosophy but only through the kind of knowledge based on clairvoyant consciousness. To the observation we use in the sense world and to the understanding limited to the sense world, the being of man, the true, inmost nature of man, lies in hidden worlds. Clairvoyant consciousness provides the point of view from which the worlds beyond the so-called threshold have to be observed; in order to perceive and learn, quite different demands are made on it from those in the sense world. This is the most important thing: that the human soul should become more or less accustomed to the fact that the way of looking at and recognizing things that for the sense world is the correct and healthy one is not the only way.

Here I shall give the name elemental world to the first world that the soul of a human being enters on becoming clairvoyant and crossing the threshold. Only a person who wants to carry the habits of the sense world into the higher super-sensible worlds can demand a uniform choice of names for all the points of view the higher worlds can offer.

Fully new demands meet the life of soul when it steps over the threshold into the elemental world. If the human so insisted on entering this world with the habits of the sense world, two things might happen: cloudiness or complete darkness would spread over the horizon of the consciousness, over the field of vision, or else — if the soul wanted to enter the elemental world without preparing itself for the peculiarities and requirements there — it would be thrown back again into the sense world. The elemental world is absolutely different, from the sense world. In this world of ours when you move from one living being to another, from one happening to the next, you have these beings and events before you and can observe them; while confronting and observing them, you keep your

own distinct existence, your own separate personality. You know all the time that in the presence of another person or happening you are the same person that you were before and that you will be the same when you confront a new situation; you can never lose yourself in another being or happening. You confront them, you stand outside them and you know you will always be the same in the sense world wherever you go.

This changes as soon as a person enters the elemental world. There it is necessary to adapt one's whole inner life of soul to a being or event so completely that one transforms one's own inner soul life into this other being, into this other event. We can learn nothing at all in the elemental world unless we become a different person within every other being, indeed unless we become similar, to a high degree, to the other beings and events.

We have to have, then, one peculiarity of soul for the elemental world: the capacity for transforming our own being into other beings outside ourselves. We must have the faculty of *metamorphosis*. We must be able to immerse ourselves in *and* become the other being. We must be able to lose the consciousness which always — in order to remain emotionally healthy — we have to have in the sense world, the consciousness of 'I am myself.' In the elemental world we get to know another being only when in a way we inwardly have 'become' the other. When we have crossed the threshold, we have to move through the elemental world in such a way that with every step we transform ourselves into every single happening, creep into every single being. It belongs to the health of a person's soul that in passing through the sense world he should hold his own and assert his individual character. But this is altogether impossible in the elemental world, where it would lead either to the darkening of his field of vision or to his being thrown back into the sense world.

You will easily understand that in order to exercise the faculty of transformation, the soul needs something more than it already possesses here in our world. The human soul *is* too weak to be able to change itself continuously and adapt itself to every sort of being if it enters the elemental world in its ordinary state. Therefore the forces of the human soul must be strengthened and heightened through the preparations described in my books ***Occult Science*** and ***Knowledge of the Higher Worlds***; from these the life of soul will become stronger and more forceful. It can then immerse itself in other entities without losing itself in the process. This being said, you will understand at once the importance of noting what is called the threshold between the sense world and the super-sensible world. We have already said that the clairvoyant consciousness of a human being on earth must go back and forth continually, that it must observe the spiritual world beyond the threshold while it is outside the physical body and must then return into the physical body,

exercising in a healthy way the faculties which lead it to the right observation of the physical sense world.

Let us suppose that a person's clairvoyant consciousness, when returning over the threshold, were to take back into the sense world the faculty of transformation it has to have in order to be at all aware of the spiritual world. The faculty of transformation I have been speaking about is a peculiarity of the human etheric body, which lives by preference in the elemental world. Now suppose that a person were to go back into the physical world keeping his etheric body as capable of transformation as it has to be in the elemental world. What would happen? Each of the worlds has its own special laws. The sense world is the world of self-contained forms, for here the Spirits of Form rule. The elemental world is the world of mobility, of metamorphosis, of transformation; just as we continually have to change in order to feel at home in that world, all the beings there are continually changing themselves. There is no enclosed, circumscribed form: all is in continual metamorphosis. A soul has to take part in this everchanging existence outside the physical body if it wants to unfold itself there. Then in the physical sense world we must allow our etheric body, as an entity of the elemental world capable of metamorphosis, to sink down into the physical body. Through this physical body I am a definite personality in the physical sense world; I am this or that distinct person. My physical body stamps my personality upon me; the physical body and the conditions of the physical world in which I find myself make me a personality. In the elemental world one is not a personality, for this would require an enclosed form. Here, however, we must note that what the clairvoyant consciousness recognizes in the human soul is, and always has been, present within it. Through the forces of the physical body, the mobility of the etheric body is restrained only for the time being. As soon as the etheric body sinks back into the physical encasement, its powers of movement are held together and adapted to the form. If the etheric body were not tucked into the physical body as if into a tote bag, it would always be impelled to continuous transformation.

Now let us suppose that a soul, becoming clairvoyant, were to carry over into the physical world this desire of its etheric body for transformation. Then with its tendency towards movement it will fit rather loosely into the physical body, and thus the soul can come into contradiction with the physical world that wants to shape it into a definite personality. The etheric body, which always wants to move freely, can come back over the threshold in the wrong way, every moment wishing to be something or someone else, someone that may be quite the opposite of the firmly imprinted form of the physical body. To put it even more concretely: a person could be, say, a Scandinavian bank executive, thanks to his physical body, but because his etheric brings over into the physical world the impulse to free itself

from physical constraints he may imagine himself to be the emperor of China. (Or, to use another example, a person may be — let us say — the president of the Theosophical Society, and if her etheric body has been loosened, she may imagine that she has been in the presence of the Director of the Universe.)

We see that the threshold that sharply divides the sense world from the super-sensible world must be respected absolutely; the soul must observe the requirements of each of the two worlds, adapting and conducting itself differently on this side and that. We have emphasized repeatedly that the peculiarities of the super-sensible world must not unlawfully be carried over when one comes back into the sense world. If I may put it more plainly, one has to understand how to conduct oneself in both worlds; one may not carry over into one world the method of observation that is right for the other.

First of all, then, we have to take note that the essential faculty for finding and feeling oneself in the elemental world is the faculty of transformation. But the human soul could never live permanently in this mobile element. The etheric body could as little remain permanently in a state of being able to transform itself as a human being in the physical world could remain continually awake. Only when we are awake can we observe the physical world; asleep, we do not perceive it. Nevertheless we have to allow the waking condition to alternate with the sleeping one. Something comparable to this is necessary in the elemental world. Just as little as it is right in the physical world to be continually awake, for life here must swing like a pendulum between waking and sleeping, so something similar is necessary for the life of the etheric body in the elemental world. There must be an opposite pole, as it were, something that works in the opposite direction to the faculty of transformation leading to perception in the spiritual world. What is it that makes the human being capable of transformation? It is his living in imagination, in mental images, the ability to make his ideas and thoughts so mobile that through his lively, flexible thinking he can dip down into other beings and happenings. For the opposite condition, comparable to sleep in the sense world, it is the will of the human being that must be developed and strengthened. For the faculty of transformation, thinking or imagination; for the opposite condition, the will.

To understand this, we should consider that in the physical sense world the human being is a self, an ego, an 'I'. It is the physical body, as long as it is awake, that contributes what is necessary for this feeling of self. The forces of the physical body, when the human being sinks down into it, supply him with the power to feel himself an ego, an 'I'. It is different in the elemental world. There the human being himself must achieve to some degree what the physical body achieves in the physical world. He can develop no feeling of self in the

elemental world if he does not exert his will, if he himself does not do the willing. This, however, calls for overcoming something that is deeply rooted in us: our love of comfort and convenience. For the elemental world this self-willing is necessary; like the alternation of sleeping and waking In the physical world, the condition of 'transforming oneself into other beings' must give way to the feeling of self-strengthened volition, just as we have become tired in the physical world and close our eyes, overcome by sleep, the moment comes in the elemental world when the etheric body feels, 'I cannot go on continually changing; now I must shut out all the beings and happenings around me. I will have to thrust it all out of my field of vision and look away from it. I now must will myself and live absolutely and entirely within myself, ignoring the other beings and occurrences.' This willing of self, excluding everything else, corresponds to sleep in the physical world.

We would be mistaken if we imagined that the alternation of transformation with strengthened ego feeling were regulated in the elemental world just as naturally as waking and sleeping are in the physical world. According to clairvoyant consciousness — and to this alone it is perceptible — it takes place at will, not passing so easily as waking here passes into sleep. After one has lived for a time in the element of metamorphosis, one feels the need within oneself to engage and use the other swing of the pendulum of elemental life. In a much more arbitrary way than with our waking and sleeping, the element of transforming oneself alternates with living within with its heightened feeling of self. Yes, our consciousness can even bring it about through its elasticity that in certain circumstances both conditions can be present at the same time: on the one hand, one transforms oneself to some degree and yet can hold together certain parts of the soul and rest within oneself. In the elemental world we can wake and sleep at the same time, something we should not try to do in the physical world if we have any concern for our soul life. We must further consider that when thinking develops into the faculty of transformation and begins to be at home in the elemental world, it cannot be used in that world in the way that is right and healthy for the physical world. What is thinking like in our ordinary world? Observe it as you follow its movement. A person is aware of thoughts in his soul; he knows that he is grasping, spinning out, connecting and separating these thoughts. Inwardly he feels himself to be the master of his thoughts, which seem rather passive; they allow themselves to be connected and separated, to be formed and then dismissed. This life of thought must develop in the elemental world a step further. There a person is not in a position to deal with thoughts that are passive. If someone really succeeds in entering that world with his clairvoyant soul, it seems as though his thoughts were not things over which he has any command: they are living beings. Only imagine how it is when you cannot form and connect and separate your thoughts but, instead, each one of them in your consciousness begins to have a life of its own, a life as an entity

in itself You thrust your consciousness into a place, it seems, where you do not find thoughts that are like those in the physical world but where they are living beings. I can only use a grotesque picture which will help us somehow to realize how different our thinking must become from what it is here. Imagine sticking your head into an anthill, while your thinking comes to a stop — you would have ants in your head instead of thoughts! It is just like that, when your soul dips down into the elemental world; your thoughts become so alive that they themselves join each other, separate from each other and lead a life of their own. We truly need a stronger power of soul to confront these living thought-beings with our consciousness than we do with the passive thoughts of the physical world, which allow themselves to be formed at will, to be connected and separated not only sensibly but often even quite foolishly. They are patient things, these thoughts of our ordinary world; they let the human soul do anything it likes with them. But it is quite different when we thrust our soul into the elemental world, where our thoughts will lead an independent life. A human being must hold his own with his soul life and assert his will in confronting these active, lively, no longer passive thoughts. In the physical world our thinking can be completely stupid and this does not harm us at all. But if we do foolish things with our thinking in the elemental world, it may well happen that our stupid thoughts, creeping around there as independent beings, can hurt us, can even cause real pain.

Thus we see that the habits of our soul life must change when we cross the threshold from the physical into the super-sensible world. If we were then to return to the physical world with the activity we have to bring to bear on the living thought entities of the elemental world and failed to develop in ourselves sound thinking with these passive thoughts, wishing rather to hold fast to the conditions of the other world, our thoughts would continually run away from us; then hurrying after them, we would become a slave to our thoughts.

When a person enters the elemental world with clairvoyant soul and develops his faculty of metamorphosis, he delves into it with his inner life, transforming himself according to the kind of entity he is confronting. What is his experience when he does this? It is something we can call sympathy and antipathy. Out of soul depths these experiences seem to well up, presenting themselves to the soul that has become clairvoyant. Quite definite kinds of sympathy and antipathy appear as it transforms itself into this or that other being. When the person proceeds from one transformation to the next, he is continually aware of different sympathies or antipathies, just as in the physical world we recognize, characterize, describe the objects and living beings, in short, perceive them when the eye sees their colour or the ear hears their tones, so correspondingly in the spiritual world we

would describe its beings in terms of particular sympathies and antipathies. Two things, however, should be noted. One is that in our usual way of speaking in the physical world we generally differentiate only between stronger and weaker degrees of sympathy and antipathy; in the elemental world the sympathies and antipathies differ from one another not only in degree but also in quality. There they vary, just as yellow here is quite different from red. As our colours are qualitatively different, so are the many varieties of sympathy and antipathy that we meet in the elemental world. In order therefore to describe this correctly, one may not merely say as one would do in the physical world — that in diving down and entering this particular entity one feels greater sympathy, while in immersing oneself in another entity one feels less sympathy. No, sympathies of all sorts and kinds can be found there.

The other point to note is this. Our usual natural attitude to sympathy and antipathy cannot be carried over into the elemental world. Here in this world we feel drawn to some people, repelled by others; we associate by choice with those who are sympathetic and wish to stay near them; we turn away from the things and people who are abhorrent and refuse to have anything to do with them. This cannot be the case in the elemental world, for there — if I may express it rather oddly — we will not find the sympathies sympathetic nor the antipathies antipathetic. This would resemble someone in the physical world saying, 'I can stand only the blues and greens, not the red or yellow colours. I simply have to run away from red and yellow!' If a being of the elemental world is antipathetic, it means that it has a distinct characteristic of that world which must be described as antipathetic, and we have to deal with it just as we deal in the sense world with the colours blue and red — not permitting one to be more sympathetic to us than the other. Here we meet all the colours with a certain calmness because they convey what the things are; only when a person is a bit neurotic does he run away from certain colours, or when he is a bull and cannot bear the sight of red. Most of us accept all the colours with equanimity and in the same way we should be able to observe with the utmost calmness the qualities of sympathy and antipathy that belong to the elemental world. For this we must necessarily change the attitude of soul usual in the physical world, where it is attracted by sympathy and repelled by antipathy; it must become completely changed. There the inner mood or disposition corresponding to the feelings of sympathy and antipathy must be replaced with what we can call soul-quiet, spirit-peacefulness. With an inwardly resolute soul life filled with spirit calm, we must immerse ourselves in the entities and transform ourselves into them; then we will feel the qualities of these beings rising within our soul depths as sympathies and antipathies. Only when we can do this, with such an attitude toward sympathy and antipathy, will the soul, in its experiences, be capable of letting the sympathetic and antipathetic perception appear before it as images

that are right and true. That is, only then are we capable not merely of feeling what the perception of sympathies and antipathies is but of really experiencing our own particular self, transformed into another being, suddenly rising up as one or another colour-picture or as one or another tone-picture of the elemental world.

You can also learn how sympathies and antipathies play a part in regard to the experience of the soul in the spiritual world if you will look with a certain amount of inner understanding at the chapter of my book *Theosophy* that describes the soul world. You will see there that the soul world is actually constructed of sympathies and antipathies. From my description you will have been able to learn that what we know as thinking in the physical sense world is really only the external shadowy imprint, called up by the physical body, of the thinking that, lying in occult depths, can be called a true living force. As soon as we enter the elemental world and move with our etheric body, thoughts become — one can say — denser, more alive, more independent, more true to their own nature. What we experience as thought in the physical body relates to this truer element of thinking as a shadow on the wall relates to the objects casting it. As a matter of fact, it is the shadow of the elemental thought-life thrown into the physical sense world through the instrumentality of the physical body. When we think, our thinking lies more or less in the shadow of thought beings. Here clairvoyant spiritual knowledge throws new light on the true nature of thinking. No philosophy, no external science, however ingenious, can determine anything of the real nature of thinking; only a knowledge based on clairvoyant **consciousness can recognize what it is.**

The same thing holds good with the nature of our willing. The will must grow stronger, for in the elemental world things are not so obliging that the ego feeling is provided for us as it is through the forces of the physical body. There we ourselves have to will the feeling of ego; we have to find out what it means for our soul to be entirely filled with the consciousness, 'I will myself'; we have to experience something of the greatest significance: that when we are not strong enough to bring forth the real act of will, 'I will myself', and not just the thought of it, at that moment we will feel ourselves falling unconscious as though in a faint. If we do not hold ourselves together in the elemental world, we will fall into a kind of faint. There we look into the true nature of the will, again something that cannot be discovered by external science or philosophy but only by the clairvoyant consciousness. What we call the will in the physical world is a shadowy image of the strong, living will of the elemental world, which grows and develops so that it can maintain the self out of its own volition without the support of external forces. We can say that everything in that world, when we grow accustomed to it, becomes self-willed.

Above all, when we have left the physical body and our etheric body has the elemental world as its environment, it is through the innate character of the etheric body that the drive to transform ourselves awakens. We wish to immerse ourselves in the other beings. However, just as in our waking state by day the need for sleep arises, so in the elemental world there arises in turn the need to be alone, to shut out everything into which we could transform ourselves. Then again, when we have felt alone for a while and developed the strong feeling of will, 'I will myself', there comes what may be called a terrible feeling of isolation, of being forsaken, which evokes the longing to awaken out of this state, of only willing oneself, to the faculty of transformation again. While we rest in physical sleep, other forces take care that we wake up; we do not have to attend to it ourselves. In the elemental world when we are in the sleeping condition of only willing ourselves, it is through the demand of feeling forsaken that we are impelled to put ourselves into the state of transformation, that is, of wanting to awaken.

From all this, you see how different are the conditions of experiencing oneself in the elemental world, of perceiving oneself there, from those of the physical world. You can judge therefore how necessary it is, again and again, to take care that the clairvoyant consciousness, passing back and forth from one world to the other, adapts itself correctly to the requirements of each world and does not carry over, on crossing the threshold, the usages of one into the other. The strengthening and invigorating of the life of soul consequently belongs to the preparation we have often described as necessary for the experience of super-sensible worlds.

What must above all become strong and forceful are the soul experiences we can call the eminently moral ones. These imprint themselves as soul dispositions in firmness of character and inner resolute calm. Inner courage and firmness of character must most especially be developed, for through weakness of character we cripple the whole life of soul, which would then come powerless into the elemental world, this we must avoid if we hope to have a true and correct experience there. No one who is really earnest about gaining knowledge in the higher worlds will therefore fail to give weight to the strengthening of the *moral* forces among all the other forces that help the soul enter those worlds. One of the most shameful errors is foisted on humanity when someone takes it on himself to say that clairvoyance should be acquired without paying attention to strengthening the moral life. It must be stressed once and for all that what I described in my book ***Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*** as the development of the lotus flowers that crystallize in the spirit body of a student/clairvoyant may indeed take place without attention to supportive moral strength, but certainly ought not to do so.

The lotus flowers must be there if a person wants to have the faculty of transformation. That faculty comes into existence when the flowers unfold their petals in a motion away from the human being, in order to grasp the spiritual world and adhere to it. Whatever a person develops as the ability to transform himself is expressed for the clairvoyant vision in the unfolding of the lotus flowers. Whatever he can acquire of a strengthened ego-feeling becomes inner firmness; we can call it an elementary backbone. Both of these must be correspondingly developed: the lotus flowers so that one can transform oneself, and an elementary backbone so that one can unfold a strengthened ego in the elemental world.

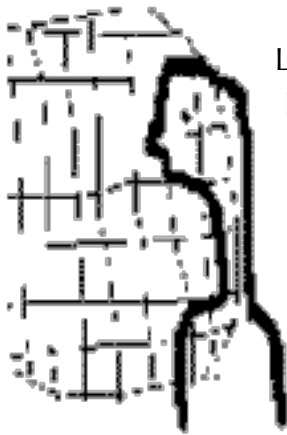
As mentioned in an earlier lecture, what develops in a spiritual way can lead to a high order of virtues in the spiritual world. But if this is allowed to stream down into the sense world, it can bring about the most terrible vices. It is the same with the lotus flowers and elementary backbone. By practising certain methods it is also possible to awaken the lotus flowers and backbone without aiming for moral firmness — but this no conscientious clairvoyant would recommend. It is not merely a question of attaining something or other in the higher worlds, but of knowing what is involved. At the moment we pass over the threshold into the spiritual world we approach the luciferic and ahrimanic beings, of whom we have already spoken; here we meet them in quite a different way from any confrontation we might have in the physical world. We will have the remarkable experience that as soon as we cross the threshold, that is, as soon as we have developed the lotus flowers and a backbone, we will see the luciferic powers coming towards us with the intention of seizing the lotus flowers. They stretch their tentacles out towards our lotus flowers; we must have developed in the right way so that we use the lotus flowers to grasp and understand the spiritual events and so that they are not themselves grasped by the luciferic powers. It is possible to prevent their being seized by these powers only by ascending into the spiritual world with firmly established moral forces.

I have already mentioned that in the physical sense world the ahrimanic forces approach us more from outside, the luciferic more from within the soul. In the spiritual world it is just the opposite: the luciferic beings come from outside and try to lay hold of the lotus flowers, whereas the ahrimanic beings come from within and settle themselves tenaciously within the elementary backbone. If we have risen into the spiritual world without the support of morality, the ahrimanic and luciferic powers form an extraordinary alliance with each other. If we have come into the higher worlds filled with ambition, vanity, pride or with the desire for power, Ahriman and Lucifer will succeed in forming a partnership with each other. I will use a picture for what they do, but this Picture corresponds to the actual situation and you will understand that what I am indicating really takes place. Ahriman and Lucifer form an alliance; together they bind the petals of the lotus flowers to

the elementary backbone. When all the petals are fastened to the backbone, the human being is tied up in himself, fettered within himself through his strongly developed lotus flowers and backbone. The results of this will be the onset of egoism and love of deception to an extent that would be impossible were he to remain normally in the physical world. Thus we see what can happen if clairvoyant consciousness is not developed in the right way: the alliance of Ahriman and Lucifer whereby the petals of the lotus flowers are fastened onto the elementary backbone, fettering a person within himself by means of his own elemental or etheric capacities. These are the things we must know if we wish to penetrate with open eyes and with understanding into the actual spiritual world.

Perceiving and Remembering

R. Steiner - 2 January 1916



Let us think of the human etheric body as it is connected with the physical body. We shall sketch it thus: representing it entirely diagrammatically, and we shall sketch the physical body as a kind of rind of the etheric body, though it must be understood that in reality it interpenetrates the whole human etheric body, except the most external part of the latter. Let this then be the etheric and physical body, and there, belonging to them, as is understood, in the whole system of man, his astral body and ego. Let us now recall that the etheric body of man naturally consists of the different kinds of ether which we have learnt to distinguish.

We recognize these as consisting of:

warmth-outer ether,
light-ether,
chemical-ether [by which the music of the spheres is communicated]
and life-ether.

Let us turn our attention to the light-ether. It is true that the whole etheric body consists of an inner blend — an inwardly organised blend of the four kinds of ether, but we shall only consider today that part of the ether body which is light-ether; and in order to fix our attention on that part of the etheric body which we call the light-ether, we have sketched it above.

Now I have often said that man really only gains consciousness of things from being actually within them with his ego and soul being. It is in the daytime, when we are awake, that the astral body and ego are within the physical and etheric bodies; one may add, as regards that part of them which is not within things. Keeping this in view we say that we

have sense perceptions. The cause of this is that the human ego and astral body first receive a revelation of things, and this revelation which remains unconscious, is then reflected on the instruments of the senses and their nerve extensions in the physical body. This has often been explained.

Now we shall inquire today: How does memory come about? How is it that we have remembrance of many things, of objects and experiences that we have passed through? How does it come to pass that we have memory?

Take this case. We meet a man today, whom we first saw five days ago. We remember that we saw him five days ago, that we spoke with him, that he told us his name. We say: we recognize this man. What is it that really takes place in us when we thus remember a man and our former meeting with him?

This is what occurs; the first thing we have to take into consideration is this, that when we met the man five days ago our etheric body experienced certain movements. It is the light part of the etheric body that we are now considering; of course, the other members of the etheric body — the heat, chemical and life parts also vibrate in sympathy, but it is the light part that we are considering today; I will speak of it therefore as the light-body. Our etheric body, then, experienced certain movements, for the thoughts evoked by the man whom we met, revealed themselves within our light-body as movements — as inner light-movements; so that apart from our having perceived the man with our senses, we received impressions [not communicated through the senses] that gave rise to movements in our light-body. Thus the whole result of our meeting with the man consisted in our light-body experiencing all kinds of movements. Picture this vividly to yourselves. While you stood before the man and spoke to him, your etheric light-body was in continual movement. What you said to him, what you felt and thought regarding him, is all disclosed in the movements of your light-body. When, several days after, you see this man again, the fresh sight of him stirs your soul, and this movement causes your etheric body, purely because of its laws of continuity, to reproduce the movements it experienced five days before, when you met the man and exchanged thoughts with him. Very well, we encounter this man again after five days. The etheric light-body, stirred by this meeting, experiences again the same movements which it did at the first meeting; and because man is always with part of his astral body and ego in the outer ether, he feels the movements which stir the outer ether, and thus because of its law of continuity [or persistence] he again becomes aware of what he experienced previously. We have really to picture to ourselves, that during the waking state we are both with our ego and astral body within the outer light-ether; sleep only consists in that part of the astral body and ego, which during the day, when we are awake, is within the physical and etheric body, also withdrawing into the outer ether.

Remembrance is this: the perception from the outer ether of inner etheric movements; the perception from the outer light-ether of movements in the inner light-body: that is, to remember.

Suppose, for example, that you see two men meet each other. Perhaps the one merely sees the face of the other, but because of this certain movements arise in his etheric body. Then he goes his way. The etheric body retains the tendency to repeat these movements if stirred to do so. Five days later these two men meet again. They perceive each other, the one whose light-body is stirred to make the same movements which it made when he saw the other's face before. This is expressed in his consciousness when he says: I have seen this face before. That is: consciousness perceives the inner movements of the light-ether from the light-ether. This is remembrance purely as an act of perception. We can say: in the external light one perceives the movements taking place in the inner light-body. But we do not see them as light movements. Why do we not see them thus in ordinary life? We do not see them as light movements, because this light-ether body is seated within the physical body, and therefore the movements of the light-ether impinge everywhere on the physical body. Through these impacts, the light movements of the etheric body are transformed into memory pictures. These light movements are not perceptible, it is only through what the memory presents to us through contact with the physical body that we are aware of them.

When the physical body is not there, that is when the body has passed through the gates of death, the ego and astral body are naturally at first far more intensely within the outer ether, till after a few days they leave the outer ether. The inner light-ether is then no longer stirred by impacts on the physical body to conceptions that are only possible in the physical body. Therefore the dead see everything that they have experienced, which the etheric body, now freed from the physical body and no longer restrained by it, throws off and allows to pass before it. During the first few days after death man sees everything pass before him; for the etheric has the tendency continually to repeat and to reproduce from within itself all those movements which the experiences of the physical body had at one time aroused in it. The man's whole life passes before him, set in motion by the vibrations of the ether body. It is seen projected as a mighty picture — one may say that all the etheric movements reflect, as in a panorama, the life just passed on earth.

If it were possible for us always so to control the physical body as we could make ourselves so independent of it — not letting it disturb us — that the etheric body also were set free [as can be done by certain meditations connected with the process described in my book "Knowledge of Higher Worlds" it might be that even in life we might see, not the results of memory — not what arises through the impact of the etheric body on the physical body, but the actual swayings and movements of the etheric body itself. We should be then in the outer ether and look at the movements of our light-body.

Why can we not do this in ordinary life? Why in ordinary life does it happen that when Miss A meets Mr. B, for example, and recognises him; she remembers him — that is, she recalls the memory-picture of him, but she does not in ordinary circumstances, leaving clairvoyance out of the question, see what she otherwise could: the inner movements of her ether body which would give her the inner experience: 'Thus has my etheric body always been stirred on meeting Mr. B.' Light would then perceive light, that is, the outer world perceive the inner — because the astral body and ego of Miss A would perceive the tendency to continual movement of her own light-body, and would know how to interpret them so as to say: 'These are the movements my light-body always experiences when I meet Mr. B.' The phenomenon would then occur, that through dwelling in the ether —

which is what we are always doing with a large part of our ego and astral body — through dwelling in the ether, through perceiving the weaving and flowing in the light-ether, we see our own little organised etheric body with its movements. We perceive light by the light, the light that is ourselves. Why can this not be done in ordinary life? Why is it that we first perceive the results of the impacts of the etheric body on the physical body?

It is because Ahriman and Lucifer are bound up with the earthly world, because Ahriman has shackled the physical body so firmly to the whole being of man, that the etheric body cannot easily free itself; because he has so densely compressed the physical body to the etheric body; and because the spirits that serve Ahriman are always present, they bring it to pass that when man is in the light, his light-body with its movements are darkened, so that he cannot behold them. Demons continually keep the light-body of man in darkness. This is because the organisation of the physical body and etheric body is brought about by Ahriman. We can therefore say [and I shall write this sentence on the blackboard, for it is of great importance]:

“When from out of and by light the human soul is capable of observing what takes place in its own light-body, it has liberated itself from the Ahrimanic forces which otherwise obscure what takes place therein.”

What might a soul wishing to attain this long and pray for? It might thus address certain powers that are in the spiritual world and which it recognizes.

‘Oh, ye Powers in the spiritual world, let me in my physical body be conscious in the world of Light, let me be in the Light so as to perceive my own light-body, and let not the power of the Ahrimanic forces be too strong for me, so as to prevent me from beholding what takes place in my light-body.’

Once more I will repeat what a soul by whom these Powers are to some extent recognised in the spiritual world, might say in longing, in a kind of prayer:

‘Oh, ye Powers, let me consciously, in the light, from out of and by the light behold the occurrences within my own light-body; weaken and take away the power of the Ahrimanic forces which obscure them. Let me consciously by the light perceive my own light, and remove the force that hinders me from seeing the light from out of and by the light.’

What I have just repeated to you is not simply an invented prayer, but it was thus that Christ taught those to pray who were able to understand Him after He had passed through the Mystery of Golgotha, during that time when He still lingered among His most intimate disciples.

This belonged to the understanding, to the Gnostic understanding that such disciples of Christ could still evoke at that time and which, as I have explained to you, disappeared about the time in which the Mystery of Golgotha took place.

Those souls which were so intimately associated with the Christ could raise their eyes to this power — who for them was the Christ — and pray Him that it might be possible for them by the light to perceive their own light-essence; pray Him to restrain the opposing

Powers of Ahrimanic nature, that their vision might not be obscured and darkened, and that they might see the light-movements of their light-body. These things were learnt by the intimate disciples of Jesus Christ during the time I have indicated. They were well aware how all things I have mentioned were brought about, and were instructed in all these matters during the time that Christ held intercourse with them after the Mystery of Golgotha.

Among the fragments that remain of ancient Gnostic wisdom I have mentioned the Pistis-Sophia script. I shall now read you an extract from it as follows:

'I will extol thee, O Light, for I desire to come to thee.'

'I will extol Thee, for Thou art my Saviour.'

'Leave me not in chaos (when I am withdrawn from the physical body). Leave me not in chaos, O Light of Heaven, for it is Thou whom I have glorified.'

'Thou hast endowed me with thy Light and saved me; Thou hast led me to the upper Gods of Chaos (consciously, when out of the physical body). May the offspring of evil now be driven out (of Ahriman, but Ahriman is not written there), who follow me, and may they sink down among the lower Gods of Chaos; and let them not come near the upper Gods, that they may behold me. May great darkness cover them and black darkness come over them; and do not let them behold me in the Light of Thy Power, which Thou hast sent me to save me, so that they may not again have power over me. The determination that they have made, to take my strength, let it not take effect nor let them gainsay me to take from me my light. Take theirs rather than mine. They have desired to take away all my light, and have not been able to do so, for Thy Light-force was with me. Because they decreed, without Thy command, to take away my light, Thou has not allowed them to take it. Because I have believed in the Light I shall not fear. The Light is my Saviour, I shall not be afraid.'

When we fear, we must think of Ahriman as we saw him in one of the Mystery Plays.

Look at this fragment of the Pistis-Sophia. Does it not appear as if it had been saved on purpose to enable us to speak somewhat as follows: Behold, you opponents of the new Spiritual Science. Does not this new Spiritual Science say: that by the light, the light-movements of the light-body can be seen, when the opposing Ahrimanic demons do not prevent it. There was once a time when this was already known; and the Pistis-Sophia presents a physical evidence of that time. For what I have read to you really speaks of nothing else than that power that I have interpreted for you from the activities of the light-body, and the sojourning of the soul within this light-body. It is not possible to understand this fragment of the Pistis-Sophia unless you understand what I have just explained to you. Therefore those who come across this script of the Pistis-Sophia and attempt to read it have to admit to themselves that they do not understand it at all. They are not humble enough to be able to do so.

This is something, however, that we must possess — this humility, this great modesty as regards the things contained in it, so that we feel constrained to say to ourselves:

'Here is a fragment of the Pistis-Sophia, which says, "I will extol Thee, O Light! for I desire to draw near unto Thee. I will extol Thee, O Light, for Thou art my Saviour." Reading it thus

I do not understand it' — but one must have such humility, such modesty, that one will not desire to understand it until one has called forth in one's self the possibility of understanding it. It is precisely in our age that such humility is hardly to be found.

The explorers who discover such writings among ruins and wreckage are frequently the least endowed with this modesty. They either explain what they find in the most trivial way saying, 'The light spoken of here is a nebulous conception intended to be taken allegorically.' Or else they say: 'Those who wrote this long ago were at a childish stage of human evolution; we have made splendid progress since then! [You will remember what I said of this yesterday] We have indeed made such magnificent progress that it is easy for us to realise that these forefathers of ours with all their wisdom, were but at a childish stage.' It is not so much a question in our day of not being able to understand, but above all that we cannot so easily come by a certain attitude of soul, which is necessary if spiritual knowledge is really to be attained.

This attitude of soul is that which existed in the Mysteries, and it consisted in a man's developing within him the feeling that it is not possible for a matter to be understood without first preparing the soul for it — without preparing oneself for the understanding of it. In our day a far more prevalent attitude of soul is that a clever man [and in his own opinion every grown man is very clever today] that the clever man can form an opinion regarding any matter. But the world is profound; and all that is connected with the hidden things of the world is also profound. Because of this belief in his own cleverness which every grown man has today, he simply ignores the most profound problems of the world; and when these mysteries are mentioned or written about they are treated with scorn, are flung aside into the obscurest corner and labeled — fanaticism and superstition, or even worse.

It is needful to see these facts clearly, for it is very important to recognize how at present those who do not desire to understand, spread scorn and derision on all that can only be reached by a soul that has first prepared itself with meekness and humility — with meekness and humility as regards knowledge. It is not only the knowledge of spiritual truths that is primarily wanting in our time, but rather that attitude of soul which shows true striving after knowledge.

The world now knows, however, that there are a few men — who will be more and more numerous — who recognise this very clearly, and note carefully and with interest, that therein lies the main driving force of true progress. One must first know what must happen and recognise clearly and without any illusion, that those who have already covered all true effort after knowledge with scorn and ridicule will attempt to interfere with everything that still has to enter into the spiritual development of mankind. It is now sought to fill mankind from childhood with materialistic ideas. This materialistic training lords it even over the tender souls of your children; materialistic schools are forced upon them, which, less through the content of their teaching than through their whole nature, imbue the children's souls with materialism.

In accordance with the illusion of the times, people veil this domination by saying: This is demanded by the age of liberty and freedom! What people call freedom in the age of

materialism is the very opposite of all freedom; but things are so arranged that people hardly notice it. Those who have some insight into how things are do no more than combat this bondage by that which must be forbidden, others again cast sheep's eyes at those in power and seize in their grasp everything that ought to be as free as the flowers that grow in the fields.

It is necessary that we should possess that really fine attitude of mind that can only come from Spiritual Science. Then before all else, it is clear to us that what should be inculcated during the tender years of childhood into the human soul is not to be found on the path followed by the methods of thought of the outer materialism of today. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by words, this we must understand. Further, it is necessary that we should free ourselves from the whole 'aura' of prejudice met with everywhere; that we should feel truly within us that attention of mind which springs from Spiritual Science and frequently ask ourselves what is within our souls from the whole essence of Spiritual Science and what is to be found there merely because we have received those forces of thought prevalent in the world today?

Perhaps as yet we can do nothing in our age to stem the course of the unfree materialistic tone of the day. But at least we must learn to feel it a bondage. Here it is that a beginning must be made. We must not be taken by illusion. For, if the world proceeds in its evolution according to the wishes of this materialistic impulse we shall gradually enter an evolution in which not only will anyone be forbidden to do anything for the health of humanity unless he is certificated, but no one will be allowed to say a word regarding science of any kind, except one who has taken a vow to speak only of such things as are patented with the stamp of the materialistic order of thought. At present the constraint of the things forbidden is not much felt. But a time is coming when, just as every effort for the healing of mankind that is not stamped and certificated will be forbidden, so every word will be forbidden that is said otherwise than in the form patented and guaranteed by the materialistic powers.

If people do not perceive the whole course of what is coming about, they will enter full-sail into this future 'freedom.' This will consist in promulgated laws forbidding people to teach differently from what is taught in a recognized school. Everything will be forbidden that recalls in the most distant way what, for instance, is taking place amongst us here. Because people do not see how the course of evolution is tending, they do not realize this. It is true very little can be done in our day; but in our thoughts we must make a beginning by realising the trend of events — wherever we can, we must make a beginning. No matter how such remarks as these are received, I had to give expression to them at this turning point of the year; for the Festival of the New Year is a kind of sign marking the progress of time generally; and at this season we can best be made aware of what is contained in time as it runs its course. It cannot be sufficiently, or too frequently impressed on you, how dependent man is today on the opinions that whirl around him — what whirl about more especially when they are made permanent with foul printers' ink in the newspapers, and this printers' ink possesses infinitely active magical powers as regards all that is believed by people throughout the world. It is interesting to note what takes place when these gentlemen are not quite united among themselves. For then there occurs what

overwhelms all thinking souls, things called into being by this black printers' ink which work dreadful magic in the masses of mankind today. Naturally there are always some who believe what one paper says, and others, again, who hold as irrefutable what is scribbled in another paper. They are divided among themselves. It is thus easy to see where the real fault and blame should lie. I will not say much on the subject, myself. You can read in Dr. Ed. Engel's book on the "Psychology of Newspaper Readers": what he has to say on this matter. He says,

'The reader of newspapers is a much muddled person. His countless valuable qualities disappear behind two: He believes everything and he forgets everything. On these two principal qualities, possessed by all newspaper readers, is founded the secret of the daily press as it exists today. Most people read but one paper, and believe what they see there. Their ideas regarding the world in the evening are the creation of what they read in the morning. When they meet other people who have read other papers and who put forward their opinions, they consider them either mad or paradoxical. Newspaper editors thoroughly understand the soul of their readers, they nurse the beliefs of their readers with tender care. A newspaper never brings to the mass of its readers a proof of what it has to communicate; even in the not uncommon case of a false presentation of facts having led to the publication of something completely foolish, they defend themselves, sheltering themselves behind the infallibility of their paper. They are, of course, obliged to publish the truth a few days later. The second quality of their readers, that of forgetfulness, then comes in usefully!'

When we come to think what a power newspapers have in the 19th century and the large share the belief in them has had in the decline of our culture, it is quite time the whole wretched business was put clearly before you. What often depresses one is, that the method of communication that we have chosen, and which should be a very different one, has to be preserved by printing. This indeed cannot be otherwise, for the Black Art is present there, and the White Art must of course reckon with this Black Art which finds expression in printed matter. We must have books, and lectures, but we ought to be awake to the fact that care must be taken that things which are now entrusted to print should not be cast abroad in the world in the same way as that which whirls through the minds of mankind on the wings of the newspapers of today.

I wish to make you realise that this is a serious matter. That is why I have permitted myself to join these observations to what I said today and yesterday in connection with great mysteries of existence, such as that of the human Earth-year, and the possibility of beholding the Light by man by the Light.

The Physical-Superphysical: Its Realisation Through Art

R.Steiner - Munich, 15th February, 1918

It was certainly out of a profound understanding of the world in general but above all out of a deep feeling for art, that Goethe coined the words: "The man to whom nature begins to reveal her open secret feels an irresistible longing for her worthiest exponent — art." Without sacrificing any of the spirit in Goethe's words we may perhaps complete what he said by adding: "The man to whom art begins to reveal her secret feels an almost

invincible antipathy towards her least worthy exponent, the science of aesthetics." That science is not what I wish to dwell upon today. It seems to me not only true to the spirit of Goethe's words but wholly in sympathy with it if we speak of art and the experiences we can have, and may frequently have had, in connection with art, in the way we like to relate those we had, or still have, with a trusty friend.

When human evolution is in question we speak of "original sin". Today I don't want to enlarge upon whether the shadow-side of man's life — important as that side is — can be exhausted if we speak of original sin in the singular. But it seems to me that in connection with a perceptive feeling for art and the creations of art it is necessary to speak of two original sins. Certainly one of these is the copying, the reproduction of the physical, that is, of what belongs purely to the world of the senses. The other seems to me to be the wish to express, represent or reveal, through art, the super-physical,. But it becomes very difficult to approach art either perceptively or creatively if both physical and super-physical are rejected. Yet the following seems to me to be in keeping with a sound human feeling: Anyone wishing in art for the physical alone can hardly get beyond a refined form of illustration, imitation which may indeed be raised to the level of art but can never become true art. And it can well be said that it reflects a life of soul run wild when anyone is willing to be satisfied by the merely illustrative element, of copying the physical or what is given in any other way by the sense world alone. It is due, however, to a kind of possession — possession by one's own understanding and reason — when there is a desire for the embodiment of an idea, for the artistic embodiment of what is purely spiritual. Interpreting a world-conception poetically, or through pictorial art, is not compatible with cultured taste; rather does it correspond to a state of barbarism in man's life of feeling Art itself, however, is deeply rooted in life; were this not sot through the whole way in which it arises it would have no justification for existence. For in face of a purely realistic world-conception art must exhibit all manner of unreality and into it must play many of the illusions of life. It is precisely because art is obliged to introduce into life what for a certain understanding is unreal, that, in some way or other, its roots must go deep down into life.

Now it may be said that from a certain boundary of perceptive feeling — from a lower boundary up to one that is higher, which in many people has to be first developed — artistic feeling in life makes its appearance everywhere. Even if not in the form of art itself this feeling arises when, in the ordinary physical existence met with in the world of the senses, what is super-physical and occult somehow makes its presence known. It arises within the super-physical, the result of pure thought, what is feelingly perceived and experienced in spirit — not by means of empty symbols or lifeless allegories but as if it would itself take on life in a physical form — lights up in a form that is perceptible to the senses. That what is ordinarily physical in everyday life has within it the super- physical, as if conjured there by magic — this is perceived by everyone who confines his mood of soul within the two boundaries mentioned.

We can certainly say this: If I am invited by anyone into a room with red walls, I take something for granted about the red walls which has to do with artistic perception. When I am taken into a red room and am face to face with the man who invited me there, I shall

have the quite natural feeling that he is about to tell me all kinds of interesting things. If he does not do so I shall feel that my being invited into the red room had something insincere about it and I shall go away dissatisfied. If anyone receives me in a blue room and by his chattering stops me from getting a word in edgeways, the whole situation will make me uncomfortable and I shall complain that in the very colour of his room the man has been lying to me. One is constantly coming across such things in life. On meeting a woman in a red dress we shall feel that she rings untrue if she seems shy; and a woman with curly hair will appear genuine only if rather pert and if she is not pert we shall feel disappointed. It goes without saying that things need not be like that in life; it is right that life should lead us away from such illusions. But there is a certain limited sphere in our mood of soul in which our feelings tend in this direction.

Naturally, too, these things are not to be taken as universal laws; they may be differently perceived by many people. The fact remains, however, that everyone in life, when confronting the external things of the sense-world, has a feeling that they contain, enchanted within them, what is spiritual — a spiritual situation, a spiritual attitude, a spiritual mood.

It may really appear as if what is seen here to be a demand of our soul, and which so often in our existence affords us bitter disappointment, must call for a special sphere of life to be created for the satisfaction of these particular needs. This special sphere seems to me that of art. Art fashions out of the rest of life precisely what satisfies the tendency lying within the limits of perception mentioned above.

Now it may be that we can fully realise what is experienced in art only by investigating more deeply the processes taking place in the soul, either in artistic creation or in the enjoyment of art. For we need only to have lived a little with art, we need only have made some attempt to get on intimate terms with it, to find that the soul-processes in the artist and the lover of art we are about to describe are in a certain sense inverted yet in reality the same. What I am wanting to describe is experienced in advance by the artist; he experiences to begin with a certain process of the soul which then resolves itself into another process; whereas the man who just enjoys works of art experiences first the second process I refer to, and only afterwards the one from which the artist makes his start. Now it seems to me that the difficulty in approaching art psychologically lies in people not going deeply enough into the human soul to grasp what actually evokes the need for art. Perhaps ours is the first age fitted for giving clearer expression to this artistic need. For whatever we may think about a great many of the trends in the art of recent times, whatever we may think about impressionism, expressionism, and so on — the discussion of which often springs from a source that has nothing to do with art — whatever we may think about all this, one thing cannot be denied. We cannot deny that since these trends have prevailed, artistic perceptions, artistic life, out of certain regions of the soul far down in the subconscious and formerly not drawn from thence, have now been brought more to the surface of consciousness. Today there is of necessity more interest in the artistic and art-appreciating processes of man's soul — promoted by all the talk about things such as impressionism and expressionism — than was the case earlier, when the artistic concepts of the scholar were very far from what was actually living in art. In recent times, where the

study of art is concerned, concepts, conceptions, have arisen which in a certain respect — at least in comparison with former days — come very near the creations of present-day art. The life of the soul is really infinitely more profound than is generally supposed. Few people have any idea that, subconsciously and unconsciously, the human being has in the depths of his soul a number of experiences seldom spoken of in ordinary life. We have to go deeper down into this life of the soul to discover the mood lying between those two boundaries. Our life of soul swings, as it were, between the various conditions, which all more or less represent two different types. On the one hand there is in man's soul something that seems to surge freely from its depths, something that often torments it, though quite unconsciously. It is something that, when the soul is especially susceptible to the mood mentioned, has a constant urge to discharge itself into consciousness as vision — though this should not take place in the case of a soundly-constituted human being. Our life of soul, when it has a tendency to this mood, is always striving, far more than we recognise, to transform itself in the sense of this vision. A healthy life of soul consists simply in confining the wish for visions to the striving for them, so that they may never actually arise.

This striving after the vision, which in reality exists in the soul of each of us, can be satisfied if we confront the soul with an external impression, an external form — for example, a work of sculpture — containing what is striving to arise but should not succeed in doing so when the soul is sound: the morbid vision. This work of art then, this outer form of what is thus striving to arise, will confine in a beneficial way to the depths of the soul what is actually wanting to become vision. We offer the soul, as it were from outside, the content of the vision, but we offer it a real work of art only if we are able out of our legitimate striving for the vision to divine what form, what plastic impression, we have to offer the soul to compensate for its longing after the visionary. I believe that many of the modern ways of approach which meet us in what is called expressionism get near this truth, and that explanations of them show a groping after what I have just been saying. People do not go far enough, however; they do not look sufficiently deeply into the soul, nor do they come to know that irresistible desire for that is visionary which is actually in the souls of us all. This is however, only the one side, and on becoming familiar with artistic creation and the appreciation of art, we can very well see how there is a source of artistic work which reflects this need of man's soul.

But there is another source of art. The source of which I have just been talking lies in a certain constitution of the human soul, in its desire to have what is visionary as a spontaneous conception. The other source lies in this — that secrets magically conjured within nature herself can be discovered only by allowing oneself, not to make scientific assumptions which are not needed, but to perceive what these deep mysteries really are in the nature that surrounds us.

These deep mysteries in nature around us, when spoken of, may perhaps appear very strange to the consciousness of present-day people. Yet there is something that precisely from our time onwards will make the kind of kind of mysteries to which I refer more and more recognized by the general public. There is in nature something which is not just the growing, sprouting life that delights the healthy souls in nature, there is also what we call

death, destruction, what is constantly destroying and overcoming one life by another. Whoever is able to perceive this will also find — to make this excellent example — when confronting the human figure that this figure in its outer realisation in life, is all the time being killed by a higher kind of life. It is the secret of all life that there is ceaseless extermination of lower life by one that is higher. The human form, permeated as it is by the human soul, the human life, is continuously being killed, overcome, by this human life, this human soul. This happens in such a way that the human form may be said to bear something within it which, if left to its own life, would be quite different. It cannot pursue its own life, however, because within it a higher life, a life of another kind, is always deadening it.

On approaching the human form the sculptor, if only unconsciously, discovers this secret through his perception. He finds that this human form is wishing for something that does not come to expression in the human being but is killed by a higher life, the life of the soul. The sculptor conjures forth from the human form what is not existing in the actual man, something missing in the actual man hidden by nature. Goethe perceived something of this kind when he spoke of “open secrets”. We can go further and say: This secret is underlying the wide realms of nature everywhere. Strictly speaking no colour, no line, appear in nature without something lower being overcome by what is higher. The reverse can also be true; the higher can be overcome by the lower. It is always possible, however, to break the spell and to re-discover what has thus actually been overcome — and this is what constitutes artistic creation.

If, on reaching what has been overcome and then freed from enchantment, we know how to experience it in the right way, it becomes artistic perception.

About this same artistic perception I should like to say something more precise.

A great deal in Goethe's work still has to be brought to light, and that often contains truths very important from the point of view of man. Take Goethe's theory of metamorphosis which starts out with how, for example, the petals in a plant are merely transformed leaves, and which is then extended to all forms in nature. When once what lies in this theory is brought fully to light by a more comprehensive development of natural science than was possible in Goethe's day, when through an all-embracing perception nature has been unveiled, Goethe's theory of metamorphosis will be capable of fuller life and of far wider application. I may say that the understanding of this theory of his is still very limited; it is capable of wide extension.

If we keep to the human figure the following may be said by way of illustration: Whoever studies the human skeleton finds, even when studying it quite superficially, that this human skeleton consists of two definite members; this might be carried further but would lead us too far afield for today. The skeleton consists firstly of the head, which to a certain extent merely rests on the remaining skeleton, and secondly of that remaining skeleton. Anyone sensitive to the metamorphosis of form, anyone who can see how one form passes over into another — in the sense Goethe meant when he said the green leaf passes over into the colourful petal — will be able, on extending this mode of observation, to see that the human head is a whole, the rest of the organism another whole, and that one is the metamorphosis of the other, In a mysterious way the whole of the rest of man may be

said — when suitably perceived — to be capable of transformation into a human head. And the human head is something which in a rounded and more developed form contains the entire human organism,. The remarkable thing is, however, that when we are capable of perceiving this when inwardly we are able really to transform the human head into the appearance of man himself, the result in both cases is something quite different, In the one case, when the head is transformed into the whole organism, something appears which shows man as a kind of ossified being, contracted, narrowed, driven throughout. into a sclerotic condition. If we let the rest of the organism work upon us so that it becomes head, we get something in appearance very unlike an ordinary man but reminding us of one only in the forms of the head, Something appears that in its growth shows no tendency to form the bony structure of the shoulder-blades, but aims at becoming wings, at spreading indeed above the shoulders, and from the wings. developing upwards over the head to appear like a kind of hood that is trying to seize hold of the head in such a way that what in the human form constitutes the ear is spread out and joined up with the wings, In short, there appears a kind of spirit-form and this spirit-form rests enhanced within the human form. This it is which, if we develop further the perception of what Goethe foreshadowed in his theory of metamorphosis, throws light into the mysteries of human nature. From this example we can see how nature in all her various spheres has the characteristic of striving — not abstractly but visibly, concretely — to be something absolutely different from what is presented to our senses. When our perceiving is thorough, nowhere do we have the feeling that any form, anything at all in nature lacks the possibility of developing beyond what it is into something quite different. Such an example as this shows particularly well how in nature one life is constantly being overcome, and even killed, by a higher life.

We do not bring to visible expression what is thus perceived as a double man, as this twofold quality in man's growth, only because something higher, something superphysical, so unites these two sides of the human being, so balances them, that we have the ordinary human form, The reason why nature — not now in an outward, spatial way but inwardly and more intensively — seems to us so magical, so mysterious, is because in each of her works she is wanting to offer us more, infinitely mores than she can, and because she puts together her several parts, all that she organises, in such a way that a higher life swallows up the life inferior to it, allowing it only partial development. Whoever directs his perception to this, will everywhere find that this open secret, this magical quality running through the whole of nature is — like the inward striving after the vision, but here working from outside — what stir a man up to take his stand somewhere beyond nature, to choose something special out of the whole, and from there to let shine forth what nature is seeking to do in one of her works — what can become a whole but has not become so in nature herself.

Perhaps I may mention here that in the Anthroposophical Society's building at Dornach, near Basle, an attempt has been made to realise in plastic form all that has just been indicated. We have tried to make a sculptural group in wood to represent what may be called the typical man; but this group represents the typical man in such a way that what otherwise is only tendency, and held in check by higher life, first comes to expression in the whole form only in gesture which is then brought back into a state of rest. The

endeavour has been made plastically to awaken this gesture which in the ordinary human being is kept under — not the gesture made by the soul but the one that is killed before it leaves the soul, the one held under by the life of the soul — and then to bring it to rest again. Thus it has been sought first to set the resting surface of the human organism in movement through gesture and then to return it to a state of repose. Through this one came quite naturally to see that something had to be given greater prominence. This something, a potentiality in every man but obviously held under by the higher life, is the asymmetry existing in us all — no-one's right and left sides being formed alike. But when this has been given greater prominence and what is held together in a higher life has been set free, then with a slightly humorous touch it has to be united with another, higher stage; then it is necessary for what approaches us in a natural way from outside to become reconciled. It becomes necessary to atone artistically for the offence against naturalism — for this stressing of asymmetry and for this translating into gesture of various things which have then to be brought to rest again. This inner offence had to be atoned for by our showing, on the other hand, the overcoming brought about when, through metamorphosis, the human head passes over into the sombre, constricted form which, in its turn, is overcome by the representative of man. This form is at the feet of the representative of man and thus can be felt as member, as part of him. The other form we had to create in addition expresses what feeling demands when not the head but the rest of the human form becomes powerful — as indeed it is in life though held in check by higher life — when all that generally remains in a stunted state is too prolific in its growth; what, for example, is characteristic in the shoulder-blades, what unconsciously is in a man's very formation, in him as a certain Luciferic element, an element that strives to get outside man's essential being. If all that lies in the human form, as arising from impulses and desires, takes actual shape — whereas otherwise it is overrun by a higher life, by the life of the understanding, the life of the reason, which develops and comes to realisation in the human head — then this makes it possible for us to free nature from enchantment, to capture from nature its open secret, by ourselves separating again the parts which nature killed by making them into a whole. Thus the onlooker is obliged in his heart to bring about what nature has already done before him. Nature has done all this, she has brought harmony to man in such a way that his various single members are combined in a harmonious whole. By setting free what has been enchanted into nature, we at the same time break nature up into her super-physical forces. Then there is no need to seek through dry allegory, nor in a way that is intellectual and without artistic feeling, for any idea, anything thought out, anything purely superphysical and spiritual, behind the objects of nature. One just asks nature quite simply: How would you develop in your various parts were your growth undisturbed by a higher life? We come to the rescue of something superphysical that has been held in the physical by enchantment and free it from the physical bonds that held it spellbound. We actually come to be naturalistic in a supernatural way.

I believe that in all the various tendencies and endeavours of recent times, still very much in an elementary stage, which call themselves impressionism, I believe we may perceive in all these the longing of our time really to discover and give shape to secrets of this kind, to this kind of physical-superphysical. For a feeling is abroad that what is actually accomplished in art — in artistic creation and in the appreciation of art — must today be raised into fuller consciousness than has been the case in former epochs. What is accomplished, namely, that a suppressed vision is appeased or that nature is confronted by

something which repeats her process — this has always been striven for. Actually these are the two sources of all art.

But let us go back to the time of Raphael. In his time the striving naturally took a different form from that of our day, of, for example, Cézanne or Hodler. What in art is represented by these two streams, however, has always been aimed at, though more or less unconsciously. But in former times it would have been looked upon as very primitive had the artist himself been unaware that in his soul something approaches nature, of a spiritual though unconscious kind, which when the artist seeks it in the physical-superphysical removes the spell from what has been enchanted into nature. Thus if we stand before one of Raphael's works we always have the feeling — if we are willing to attempt the interpretation of what otherwise remains in the obscurity of the subconscious without occasion for expression — the feeling that in this work of art we come to an understanding with something, and also indirectly with Raphael himself.

About all this we may have the feeling (as I said, there is no occasion to speak of it even in our own soul) that we have been together with Raphael in a former life on earth, when we learned from him many things that have entered deeply into our soul, and that this centuries-old connection with the soul of Raphael had become entirely subconscious — suddenly, however, springing into life again as we stand in front of his works. We believe we are face to face with something that took place long ago between our soul and that of Raphael.

From the artist of more recent times we get no such feeling, The modern artist leads one spiritually, as it were, into his studio; what there takes place comes very near to the level of consciousness and belongs to the immediate present. Because this longing, this need of the age, prevails, the rising conception that is actually a suppressed vision, seeks in our time satisfaction through art. On the other hand there meets us, though today in a rather elementary form, a breaking-up of what is otherwise union — an imitation of nature's own process.

What infinite significance everything gains that recent painters have attempted in order to study the various colours, to study the light in its variety of shades, and to discover how, ultimately, every effect of light, every shade of colour, aims at becoming more than it can be when forced into a whole where it is killed by a higher life. What have they not attempted in order that, starting from a feeling of this kind, light should be awakened to life, treated in such a way as to set free what, when the light has to serve in bringing about the ordinary processes and happenings in nature, remains enchanted within light. We are only at the very beginnings of all this. From these beginnings, which today are the expression of a legitimate longing, it will probably be possible, however, to experience that something in the realm of art becomes a secret — a secret which is then revealed. When put into words this sounds rather trite but many things that sound so hide secrets; we have to draw near these secrets, especially to perception of them. What I am meaning here answers the question: Why is it impossible to portray fire and air? It is quite clear that in reality fire cannot be painted. No one could have the true perception of the painter who would want to paint the glittering, glowing life that is only to be held fast by the light. It

should never enter the head of anyone to want to paint lightning — still less to paint the air!

On the other hand we have to admit that everything contained in light conceals within it what is striving to become like fire, striving to develop in such a way that it says something, gives an impression of something welling up out of the light, out of each single shade of colour — just as human speech wells up from the human organism. Every effect of light wants to tell us something, every effect of light has something to say to some other effect of light nearby. In every effect of light there is a life which is overcome, deadened, by higher conditions. If our perception takes this path we discover what the colour feels, what the colour is saying, and what is being striven for in this age of “plain air” panting. If we discover the secret of colour this perception is widened and we find that, strictly speaking, what I have just been saying is perfectly valid; but not in the same way for all colours because the colours say very different things. Whereas the bright colours, the reds and the yellows, attack us and tell us a great deal, the blue colours take the picture more into the realm of form. Through blue indeed we enter form, enter essentially into the form-creating soul. We have been on the road to such discoveries but often we have stopped short halfway. Many of Signac's pictures seem so little satisfying — though in another respect they can give much satisfaction — because blue is always treated in the same way as, let us say, yellow or red, without any recognition that a patch of blue when next to yellow expresses something quite different in value from yellow beside red. This appears rather trivial to anyone with a feeling for colour, yet in a deeper sense people are only just beginning to discover such secrets. Blue, violet, are colours which take the picture right out of the realm of the expressive into that of the inner perspective. It is quite conceivable that, solely by the use of blue in a picture by the side of the other colours, one can produce a wonderfully intensive perspective without the aid of any drawing. It is possible to go further in this direction. We come then to recognise that a design might be called the work of colour itself., When anyone succeeds in putting movement into his use of colour so that, in a mysterious way, the design follows the guidance of the colour, he will notice that this is particularly the case with blue. It is less so with yellow and red for it is not in their nature to be led in that way to inner movement, to move from one point to another. If we want to have a form inwardly in movement — in flight, for instance — a form which by reason of its inner movement at one time becomes small inwardly, at another big, a form moving in fact within itself, then without having recourse to any rational principle or any, never justifiable, intellectual aesthetics, but proceeding from a quite elementary feeling, we shall find ourselves absolutely obliged to use and bring into movement various shades of blue. We shall notice that in reality a line is able to come into being, the design able to make its appearance, definite form to arise, only when we continue what we began when setting the blue colour into movement. For every time we pass from the realm of painting, of working in colour, to that of outline of form, we carry the physical over into what is essentially superphysical. Passing from the bright colours through the blue and from there somehow inwardly into the picture, we shall have in the bright colours the transition to a physical-superphysical, which may be said to contain a slight superphysical tone: this is because colour always has something to say, because colour has soul that is always superphysical. We shall then find that the further we go into the realm of drawing

the more we enter the abstract superphysical, which, however, because it makes its appearance in the physical must take to itself physical form.

Today I can give you only an indication of these things. It is clear, however, that this is the way to understand how in one particular sphere the colour, the sketch, can be so used in creative art that in its application is everything of which I said it is held under the spell of nature, and from this spell we free the super-physical, which is hidden in the physical and deadened by a higher life.

How, if we look at plastic art we shall find that here both for plane surfaces and lines, there are always two interpretations only one of which, however, I shall be speaking about. To begin with, right feeling will not suffer the plastic surface to remain what it is, for example in the ordinary human form; there it is killed by the human soul, by the life of the human being, thus by what is higher. When we have first drawn out, spiritually, the life of the soul in the human form, we have then to seek the life of the surface itself, the soul of the soul of the form itself. We see how this is to be found if we do not bend the surface once only but a second time as well, so that we get a double curve. We notice how in this way we can make the form speak, how, deep in our subconscious, as opposed to what I have shown to be more an analysing tendency, there is also a tendency that is synthetic. The physical nature falls into what is genuinely physical-superphysical, which is overcome only by the higher stages of life. Inside those barriers of the soul of which we have spoken, we have as instinctive urge to free nature from enchantment in this way, in order to see how the physical-superphysical lies hidden in nature in as many different forms as, shall we say, crystals in their rock bed, which because they are in that rocky bed have their surfaces worn down. But a man has within him, often very decidedly so, just when in his subconscious this cleavage, this analysing, this breaking down of nature into the physical-superphysical is very pronounced — he has within him the faculty that may be called aesthetic synthesis, a tendency to synthesize in art.

The strange thing is that anyone with a capacity for rightly observing his fellow men will discover how they always use one of their senses in a very one-sided way. When with the eye we see colours, forms, effects of light, we are giving the eye a most one-sided development. In the eye there is always something resembling the sense of touch; the eye while looking is, at the same time, always feeling. In ordinary life this is suppressed. Because the eye is given this one-sided trend, however, if we are able to perceive such things, we still find the urge in us to experience what is thus suppressed, namely, what the eye develops as a sense of feeling, a sense of self, a sense of movement when we move through space and feel the motion of our limbs. What in the eye is thus suppressed of the other senses, we feel — although it remains quiescent — to be aroused by looking at the other man, What is thus aroused by what we see, what, however, is suppressed by the one-sided trend of the eye, it is this that is given form by the sculptor.

The sculptor actually models forms which the eye indeed sees but sees so dimly that this dim vision remains in the subconscious. The sculptor makes use of that point where the sense of touch is just passing over into the sense of sight. Therefore he must, or will anyway try to, reduce the quiescent form, which to the one-sided eye is only an object, to

reduce this form to gesture that is always inciting imitation of itself, and then to bring back this gesture, that has been thus conjured up, into a state of rest. In reality what in one direction has been aroused and in another direction brought again to rest, what when we create or enjoy artistic work is active in us as a process of the soul, is always, from one aspect, like a manes in-breathing and out-breathing in ordinary life. This process drawn up from the human soul has, at times, a grotesque effect, although on the other hand it promotes a feeling of the vastness, the endlessness, of all that has been enchanted into nature. The development of art — we see this in certain attempts made in recent decades and especially in those of today — moves altogether towards penetrating these secrets and more or, less unconsciously putting such things into form. There is no need to talk much about them; they will increasingly find expression through art.

We shall perceive, for example, the following. In the case of certain artists it can indeed be said that more or less consciously or unconsciously they have perceived something of this kind — we understand the recently-deceased Gustave Klimt, for instance, particularly well if we allow such assumptions to hold good for his perceptions and his reason. Some day the following will be perceived. Let us suppose someone were to feel the desire to paint a pretty woman. There must then take shape in his soul some kind of image of her. Anyone, however, who is sensitive can perceive that, the moment he has made this fixed image of her, he has inwardly, spiritually, super-physically deprived her of life. The very moment we decide to paint a portrait of a pretty woman we have spiritually given her over to death, we have taken something away from her. Otherwise, we could look at the woman as she is in life, we would not give shape in our picture to what it is possible to present there artistically. For artistically we have first to kill the woman; then we must be able to bring to bear that light touch of humour in order inwardly to call her back to life.

Now anyone with a naturalistic approach cannot do this; naturalistic art suffers from the inability to adopt this lighter touch. Naturalistic art therefore offers us a great deal that has no life, that kills all that is higher in nature; and it lacks that light touch needed for giving renewed life to what in the first place it has to kill. In the case of many charming women it appears indeed as if they had not only been secretly killed but maltreated beforehand. This deadening process always moves in one direction and is connected with the necessity for creating anew that which, on a higher level of life, overcomes in nature what is striving for existence. There is always first a deadening, then through this lighter mood a giving of fresh life. This process must take place both in the soul of the creative artist and in that of the art-lover. Anyone wishing to paint some cheery young mountain-peasant has no need to make a faithful copy of what he sees; he must above all be clear that his artistic conception has killed the young peasant or anyway benumbed him and that he must awaken fresh life in this stiff image by fashioning him in a way that brings him into new connection with the rest of nature. This was attempted by Hodler and. is entirely in sympathy with what artists are longing for today.

These two sources of art can be said to represent very deep needs, subconscious needs, of the human soul. The satisfying of what would become actual vision, but is not permitted to do so in a man of a sound nature, this always develops more or less into the form of art called expressionism — though the name is not of importance. What is created with the

purpose of re-uniting what in some form has been broken up onto its physical-superphysical constituents, or has been deprived of its immediate physical life, will lead to impressionism. These two needs of the human soul have ever been the source of art; and by reason of man's general development in recent times, the first of these needs has taken the expressionistic path, the second the impressionistic. In all probability as we hasten towards the future this will increase very much. If our perception is extended, and not just our intellectual consciousness, the art of the future will be perceived as the intensifying particularly of these two trends. These two trends — and this must be constantly emphasized if we are to avoid certain misconceptions — do not represent anything in the least unsound. Men will fall into an unsound condition if, between those two boundaries, the healthy, primitive and natural pull towards the visionary is not satisfied through artistic expression. Or they will do so when what is always going on in the subconscious, namely, the breaking down of nature into what is physical-superphysical in her is not, through the true touch of artistic humour, constantly permeated by a higher life so that they are enabled to recreate in their artistic work what is creatively brought to expression by nature.

I firmly believe that the processes of art lie in many respects extremely deep in the subconscious, yet in certain circumstances it can be important for life to have living, telling conceptions of the artistic process such as have an effect upon the soul that no weak conceptions can exercise, conceptions which flow actually into the feeling. When in accordance with feeling these two sources of art hold sway in the human soul, we shall certainly realise out of what sound perception Goethe spoke when at a certain moment of life (such things always savour of one-sidedness) he felt the pure, genuine, artistic nature of music: "Therefore music represents what is supreme in art, because it has no possibility of imitating anything in nature, being in its own element both content and form." (As I said, this is one-sided, for every art can reach these heights; but characterizations are always one-sided.) Every art, however, in its inherent element becomes its own content and form, when it does not wrest nature's secrets from her by subtle reasoning but discovers in the way indicated today, the physical-superphysical. I believe that in the soul there often takes place a quite secret process when we become aware of the physical-superphysical in nature. It was Goethe himself who coined the expression "physical-superphysical"; and in spite of his having called the secret "open" it can be discovered only when subconscious forces of the soul are able to sink themselves deeply into nature.

What is visionary comes into being in the soul because the superphysical experience is pressing to discharge itself, is surging up out of the soul. The outward experience that is spiritual experience, not through vision — which in spiritual science is purified till it becomes Imagination — but through Intuition. Through the vision we place what is within us to a certain degree outside, so that the inner becomes in us the outer. In Intuition we go outside ourselves — step out into the world. This stepping out, however, remains an unreality as long as we are unable to set free what is spell-bound in nature and is always wishing to overcome nature by a higher life. If we made our way into what belongs to nature when this is freed from enchantment, we then live in Intuitions. In so far as these Intuitions prevail in art, they are indeed connected with intimate experiences possible for the soul when, outside itself, it is united with external things. This is why Goethe, out of his actual, highly impressionistic art, could say to a friend: "I will tell you something that can

explain people's attitude to my work. It can be really understood only by those who have had the same kind of experience as myself, those who have been in a similar situation." Goethe already possessed this artistic perception. This is apparent poetically in the second part of his Faust, which up to now has met with but little understanding. He was able artistically to perceive that the physical-superphysical is to be sought in the recognition of how each part of nature is striving beyond itself to become a whole, through metamorphosis to become something different; it comprises with this something different, a new product of nature but is then killed by a higher life.

When we thus penetrate into nature we come to true reality in a much higher sense than ordinary consciousness believes. What we here come to is the most conclusive proof that art has no need either to make merely a faithful copy of the physical or to bring to expression the superphysical, the spiritual, alone. That would mean erring in two directions, But what art can shape, can express, is the physical in the superphysical, the superphysical in the physical. It is perhaps just this that constitutes man's naturalism in the truest sense of the term — that he recognises the physical-superphysical and can grasp it precisely through his being at the same time a super-naturalist. Thus, real artistic experiences can, I believe, be developed in the soul in such a way that they arouse understanding of art, appreciation of art, and that a man is enabled indeed to train himself to a certain extent to live in art as an artist. In any case a profound study of this kind of the physical-superphysical, and its realisation through art, will make Goethe's words comprehensible — words arising out of deep perception and wide understanding of the world, words with which I began this lecture and now bring it to a close. These words will give a comprehensive picture of man's relation to art when once we are able to grasp in all its depths the relation of art to what is genuine, superphysical reality. Because human beings can never live without the superphysical, they will through their own needs be brought to realise more and more the truth of what Goethe has said: "The man to whom nature begins to reveal her open secret feels an irresistible longing for her worthiest exponent — art."